



Testimony of Chris Phelps, State Director, Environment Connecticut
Before the Connecticut General Assembly General Law Committee

February 22, 2022

SUPPORT: S.B. 121 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAIR RIGHT TO REPAIR ACT

Environment Connecticut is a nonprofit, nonpartisan environmental advocacy organization. Together with our colleagues at Environment America and state environment groups across the country, we advocate for clean air, clean water, clean energy, open spaces, and a safe climate.

Good morning Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino, Senator Witkos, Representative Rutigliano and members of the Committee.

I am writing to express Environment Connecticut's support for SB 121, AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAIR RIGHT TO REPAIR ACT, because we can and should reduce waste by making it easier to repair our own stuff. Let me give you a few facts that I feel underscore the problem, and the absurdity of continuing to allow barriers to repair:

- Electronic waste is a growing concern, the World Economic Council issued a report earlier finding that e-waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the world -- and as of June 2021, the U.S. EPA reports that e-waste is the fastest growing part of our domestic municipal waste streams.
- The EPA estimated that in 2014, approximately 416,000 mobile phones were disposed of each day in this country. If you break that down per capita, that means Connecticut gets rid of some 4,200 cell phones every day.
- E-waste contains toxic materials. It's estimated that 40% of the heavy metals in U.S. landfills come from discarded electronics, according to EPEAT, a green electronic rating system.
- Unfortunately, e-waste is very difficult to recycle. Only around 20% of e-waste is recycled. We might be able to get to higher percentages, but when you fix a tiny part of something and keep it working, it's better than recycling 99% of that product. The best

way to responsibly process waste is to limit needless waste and reduce the amounts we create.

- And by far the largest environmental impact of consumer electronics is in manufacturing, not use. For example, 81% of a desktop computer's energy use is in making it, and only 19% in using it; for smartphones it's 85% percent.
- In fact, manufacturing electronics is so emissions intensive that if Americans used their smartphones for one year longer on average, it would have the same benefits to the climate as taking 636,000 cars off the road.

Environment Connecticut has been a part of the growing national demand for Right to Repair reforms, as part of our larger national network. There is extensive opposition to the idea, led by manufacturers who stand to gain when the public rapidly replaces all their devices for simple failures. Those opposition forces will make a host of arguments about damage which could be done when people have access to the parts, tools and information needed to conduct repairs. The Federal Trade Commission spent two years investigating these claims and found there was essentially no evidence to support the assertion that repair access undermines safety, security, privacy or intellectual property. All of their work is found in the [May 2021 report, "Nixing the Fix."](#)

By far the easiest, cheapest way to address our e-waste problems is to keep our electronics and digital products in use when we can, and there are numerous people in our communities who are glad to do that work. We are only asking for a little help to solve this problem for ourselves, with the ingenuity of average Connecticut residents. Frankly, there just isn't a good reason why we can't be allowed to fix our own stuff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Chris Phelps
State Director, Environment Connecticut